Author Guide: Math for the People

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[**Project Homepage**](http://web.stevenson.edu/mbranson/m4tp/index.html)

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# Welcome/Introduction

Math for the People is a new approach to teaching Quantitative Literacy to students outside of traditional STEM fields. By leading with social justice topics, Math for the People seeks to introduce students first to the problems we want to solve, and then introduce the mathematics we can use to understand them.

The textbook is intended for a college freshman level course in quantitative literacy at a two or four-year postsecondary institution. This course would fulfill a terminal mathematics requirement for students whose degree programs do not require any further mathematics.

The text will be structured in stand-alone modules, each related to a single social justice topic. Each module will begin with an overview of the topic, historical context, and a discussion of current questions and concerns related to the topic. This section may include particular case studies related to the topic, articles discussing the topic, and other resources. This section will followed by discussion prompts for faculty to use in helping students explore the issue.

The mathematical content will follow. Each topic will be paired with 2-4 mathematical topics which will help the reader to ask questions and build understanding about the social justice topic being discussed. These mathematical topic sections will be connected directly to the social justice topic. The same mathematical topic may be repeated in multiple places throughout the text (for example, a section on exponential growth may be included in the module on climate change as well as the module on predatory lending – in each section, the topics would be couched in examples related to the social justice topic).

# Help Needed

We’re asking for author contributions of individual course modules. Individual modules can vary in length, but they should ideally be structured to cover 2-4 weeks of course time in a 3-credit hour semester long course.

# Author Commitments

The primary authors both hold doctorates in Mathematics, and we are seeking authors who will write from a mathematical perspective. Keeping that in mind, we are open to submissions from both those holding higher degrees (Masters or Doctorate) in Mathematics, as well as submissions from authors in other fields who are interested in the mathematical perspective. We are especially interested in featuring young career mathematicians and authors from traditionally underrepresented minorities.

## Licensing

## The project will be authored under a [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/). Because of the nature of the text, we are committed to openly sharing the information that we produce and avoiding commercial applications of the text. The CC BY-NC-SA license allows users to share and adapt the materials however they like, as long as the use is non-commercial, the original authorship is attributed, and the adapted materials are shared under the same license.

## Project Participation

We ask that all authors commit to:

* Writing their module
* Reviewing one or more other modules
* Participating in a monthly author’s check-in

If you’re not able to participate at this level, we are happy to have contributions from additional reviewers, editors, and classroom reviewers.

## Author Code

Authors should ensure their contributions are free of libel, plagiarism, copyright violations, or factual errors. Language and examples should be inclusive of students from all cultures, with particular effort given to making students who have not been engaged with mathematics feel welcome and comfortable with the text.

# Content Guidelines

## Structure

The text will be structured in stand-alone modules, each related to a single social justice topic. Each module will begin with an overview of the topic, historical context, and a discussion of current questions and concerns related to the topic. This section may include particular case studies related to the topic, articles discussing the topic, and other resources. This section will be followed by discussion prompts for faculty to use in helping students explore the issue.

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## Audience & Tone

The intended audience are first-year college students who are prepared for college-level mathematics. It is primarily intended for students who are taking mathematics to fulfill a liberal arts or general education requirement. Many of these students will have limited mathematics background or negative experiences with mathematics. The text should avoid complex mathematical symbols and extensive algebraic notation. The utility of mathematics should be emphasized over abstract mathematical proof & reasoning.

## Citations, Styles & Formatting

The text should be written in the provided LaTeX or PreTeXt template. If you are not familiar with LaTeX or PreTeXt, please reach out to the lead authors to discuss how best you can contribute your material.

## Language

Authors are expected to use inclusive language wherever possible. If you are unsure about the appropriate way to refer a particular population or group, the [Diversity Style Guide](https://www.diversitystyleguide.com/) is an excellent resource, with links to specific resources created by diverse populations to guide journalists in discussing the issues facing their communities.

Math for the People will use the following specific conventions, and you can assist the editors by proactively following these guidelines in your own writing. Our plan is to add to this list of guidelines as we continue to develop the book, so you can consult this guide for future updates.

* We will capitalize Black when it is used to refer to the race.
* We will use gender neutral language (they/them pronouns, de-gendered versions of professions like “police officer” instead of “policeman,” avoiding words with gendered connotations like “secretary”) wherever possible. Gendered language should be used where necessary to discuss gender-related topics.
* We will use LGBTQ+ to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and other gender/sexual minorities community.
* We will avoid language which has been used in the past to marginalize the mentally ill & disabled, even if that language has developed additional meanings (words like “crazy,” “idiot,” “handicapped,” or “cretin.”)

## Media (Images, Video, Audio etc.)

Where appropriate, you can choose to include images, video or sound clips along with the written text. Please ensure that these elements are in the public domain or carry a CC-BY, CC-BY-SA or a CC0 license, and that you clearly indicate and link to the source in your submission.

The following are useful sources of public domain and CC-BY licensed multimedia content:

* [The Internet Archive](http://www.internetarchive.org/)
* [Creative Commons](https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/)
* [The Met Museum](http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection)
* [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/creativecommons)
* [Open Culture](http://www.openculture.com/)
* [Free Music Archive](http://freemusicarchive.org/)
* [Pixabay](http://pixabay.com)
* [Pexels](http://pexels.com)
* [Wikimedia Commons](http://commons.wikimedia.org)

Note that all images should be given captions and descriptive alternative text, where appropriate. See the [Accessibility](#_8m68vy96d6i8) section below for more. If writing in PreTeXt, the alternative text can be included using the “description” option in the <image> tag. If writing in LaTeX, you should include the alternative text after the \includegraphics tag for the editors to convert to PreTeXt.

Images should be in SVG, PNG, PDF, or JPEG format. Videos should be in OGG, WEBM, or MP4 format, or hosted independently on a site elsewhere on the internet. If you are not familiar with writing in PreTeXt, you can provide the authoring team with a video file/link and information on where the video should go in the text.

## Accessibility

Authors are asked to ensure that their sections fulfill accessibility best practices. Building in certain key elements from the beginning will make a big difference in ensuring the text is accessible to all students who will use it in their courses. The following are the main areas to keep in mind — follow the links to read more.

[Organization of content/Headings](https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/chapter/organizing-content/) — Many students need clear cues to navigate content, so keeping the organisation and hierarchy consistent are important. Use the structure from the PreTeXt or LaTeX templates to support this organization. If you need additional structure at lower levels (which is encouraged!) use <subsubsection> or \subsubsection. This helps to structure the content in a logical way for all students, including those using screen readers.

Lists — Use the PreTeXt (<ul> and <ol> tags) or LaTeX (\itemize and \enumerate) to build lists rather than formatting lists as text.

[Images & colour](https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/chapter/imageschartsgraphsmaps/) — Include a text description for any functional images that communicate important information. This will likely be more in depth than an image caption, and should contain enough information that a student can understand the concept depicted without seeing the image. (Note: this isn’t required for decorative images!). You should also avoid using colour as the only means of communicating information (e.g. on a graph).

[Tables](https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/chapter/tables/) — Make sure you avoid inserting images of tables, and instead enter the content as an editable table. This ensures that it will be accessible for students using screen readers.

[Multimedia](https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/chapter/media/) — If you’re including video or audio content, it should ideally have captions or a transcript available. If this is not available for a resource in your section, please flag this in your submission for the editing team to address.

The information above is drawn from the [BCcampus Open Education Accessibility Toolkit](https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/). Please read through the rest of the text for more on accessibility best practices.

If you have any questions or require support in meeting these standards, please contact the lead authors.

# Submission Information

## Due Dates

We’ll be soliciting authors in two initial phases:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Call for Proposals | Response to Proposals | Due Date | Review Period | Publication |
| Phase I | 04/23/21 | 05/07/21 | 08/30/21 | 08/31/21-01/15/22 | 03/17/22 |
| Phase 2 | 04/22/22 | 05/06/22 | 09/02/22 | 09/03/22-01/13/22 | 03/17/23 |

## How to Submit

Final modules (and any supporting materials) should be uploaded at: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/dJo0yHNa2q4z8VvJVKRc>. You will receive an email confirmation once your module has been received. Please submit the source (.xml or .tex) files for your PreTeXt or LaTeX submission.

## Editing & Review

The editing & review process is still under development. We’ll be soliciting input from authors on how we model our review process.

# Recognition for Contributors

This project couldn’t happen without your participation. All contributing authors will be credited prominently in their chapter, the book and promotional materials. All editors, reviewers and other contributors will also be credited.

# Questions? Want to Learn More?

For more information about the project, please email Mark Branson at [mbranson@stevenson.edu](mailto:mbranson@stevenson.edu) or Whitney George at [wgeorge@uwlax.edu](mailto:wgeorge@uwlax.edu?subject=Math%20for%20the%20People) We are interested in whatever support or interest you have in the text – whether it’s authoring, editing, reviewing, or using the text in the classroom! We’re also happy to hear suggestions from our colleagues about what kinds of topics and modules would be useful to add to the text. We also maintain a Facebook group at [Math For the People](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1071362346715937/) which creates opportunities for contributors to connect and share ideas.

You can also read more about the project at the [Math For the People homepage](https://www1.rebus.community/#/project/8825e826-1c44-4900-95e4-ef14b4704be2) on the Rebus Community.

# Spread the word!

Encourage anyone interested in the project to share it within their networks and encourage colleagues who might be a good fit to sign up!